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Serbia

Poultry and Products

An Avian Influenza Case in Domestic Poultry is Confirmed in Serbia

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Approved by:

Hassan F. Ahmed
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Hassan F. Ahmed and Tatjana Buric-Maslac

Report Highlights:

On March 23, the Serbian government confirmed the first case of Avian Influenza in domestic poultry in western Serbia near the Bosnian border. Samples taken from a dead rooster on March 15 were analyzed by the EU reference lab in the UK and tested positive for the H5N1 virus. The Serbian Veterinary Service implemented several protection measures and established protection and surveillance zones in the affected area. A compensation scheme has been implemented to compensate the owners of culled poultry, at an average of 850 dinars per bird and 6 dinars per egg. Poultry sales are reported to be down 10 percent but prices are steady.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Belgrade [YU1]
[SR]

On March 15, the government of Serbia announced that the first case of Avian Influenza was found in the domestic poultry in Serbia. A rooster was found dead in a backyard holding in Bajina Basta, on the Drina River, near the Serbian-Bosnian border. Preliminary tests at the laboratory of the Veterinary Institute in Kraljevo indicated that the bird was infected with the deadly H5N1 virus. On March 23, the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture received a confirmation from the EU reference laboratory in Weybridge, England that samples taken from the dead rooster tested positive for the H5N1 virus. So far, 11 cases of bird flu have been registered in Serbia, 10 cases on wild birds (mostly swans) and one case in domestic poultry.

The Serbian Veterinary Services declared an area of 3 km around the outbreak area of Bajina Basta where the infected rooster was found as a protection zone. An area of 10 km radius around the outbreak was declared as surveillance zone. The government has taken several steps to eradicate and prevent the spreading of Avian Influenza in the region and announced the implementation of the following measures:

- Identification of all holdings within the zone
- Keeping poultry and other captive birds indoors in order to prevent any contact with wild birds and other animals
- Implementation of appropriate bio-security measures (disinfections barriers on entrances and exists of holding in which the suspected animals are kept and breed, regular cleaning and maintenance of holdings and equipment, storage and disinfections of manure, litter and waste materials on places designated and regulated for that purpose)
- Storing animal feed indoors
- Ban on any movements of poultry and other captive birds as well products, raw materials and offal originated from poultry
- Ban on transport of poultry to and from protection zone
- Establishing of disinfections points on border between protection and surveillance zone

A days after the dead rooster was found, four people who had been in contact with infected rooster were hospitalized for suspicion of having the AI virus but were released two days later after their tests were found negative for the H5N1 virus. The Serbian President Boris Tadic, accompanied by the CVO, Dr. Dejan Krnjaic, visited the affected area to assure the general public and people in the area that his government doing its best efforts in dealing with the AI issue in Serbia.

Impact of AI on the Poultry Sector in Serbia

Since the announcement of the first case of AI in domestic poultry in Serbia, a total of 710 birds (chickens, hens, rosters and ducks) from 38 backyard holdings as well as two cats have been culled in the affected area to prevent spreading of the virus. A compensation scheme has been implemented to compensate the owners of the culled poultry, with payment of 850 dinars per bird and 6 dinars per egg. [\$US = 72 dinar].

Poultry production in Serbia is controlled mostly by few large private firms, with modern slaughterhouses, and thousands of small-scale farms and backyard producers. It is estimated that backyard poultry production accounts for 30 percent of total production in Serbia. Many of these small backyard holdings produce poultry for their household consumption or for sales outside legal market channels. In 2005, total poultry production in Serbia was estimated at 76,000 MT. Following the implementation of the government measures to contain the spreading of AI virus, sales of domestic produced poultry and eggs in Serbia in the open green markets plummeted. Commercial poultry producers are reporting about 10 percent decline in poultry meat sales and almost 50 percent of egg

sales. The negative impact of AI was greater on the small producers. It is estimated that total poultry consumption in Serbia has declined about 10 percent. Poultry meat prices, however, are still steady and no significant changes were reported. Currently, the average retail price of whole fresh chicken (most common in Serbia) is 250 dinars/kg (\$3.5/kg). Average egg price is about 96 dinars a dozen (\$1.3 dozen).

Although Serbian consumers prefer fresh poultry, there are some quantities of frozen poultry meat imported into the country every year, mostly for supper-market sales. In 2005, Serbia imported about 972 MT of poultry meat (90 percent of which is poultry products) mainly from Hungary, Slovenia, Germany and Netherlands. Serbia poultry meat exports in 2005 were estimated at 1,211 MT, mostly to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Even after the announcement the first cases of Avian Influenza in domestic poultry, Bosnia-Herzegovina has not stopped poultry imports from Serbia